

Preference in Hiring

Section 3161 provides that, to the extent practicable, terminated employees at a defense nuclear facility should receive preference in filling vacancies in the work force of the Department of Energy and its contractors and subcontractors. The Department has determined that employees must be identified as having helped maintain the Nation's nuclear deterrent in order to qualify for this preference. The preference should be honored by all prime contractors, and subcontractors whose contracts with the Department equal or exceed \$500,000 in value.

The Department has established the following criteria for determining eligibility for the hiring preference. The individual must be a former employee who (1) was involuntarily terminated (except if terminated for cause); (2) meets the eligibility standards described below; and (3) is qualified for the job at the time the work is to begin. Where qualifications are approximately equal, eligible individuals will be given preference in hiring. However, the preference will be administered consistent with applicable law, regulation, or executive order, and collective-bargaining agreements. This preference is not immediately applicable through an outsourcing action or follow-on contract in which the current employees are first offered their same or similar jobs with the replacement contractor in order to avoid a layoff.

An individual's hiring preference continues until termination by the action (or inaction) of that individual. Initially, and on an annual basis thereafter, eligible individuals must certify their desire to retain their hiring preference. Actions that would terminate an individual's hiring preference include: voluntary termination or termination for cause from a position that was obtained through the exercise of the preference, or failure to comply with the annual certification requirement.

Each field organization should develop procedures to ensure that the hiring preference is being honored by all prime contractors and designated subcontractors. Field organization procedures should also describe how the Job Opportunity Bulletin Board System is to be utilized by affected contractors and eligible individuals.

Eligibility Criteria

A. *Regular Employees:*

1. must have been working at a defense nuclear facility on September 27, 1991;
2. must have worked full-time (or regular part time) at a facility from that date through the date of the restructuring notification; and

3. must have been involuntarily separated other than for cause.

B. *Intermittent Workers, Including Construction Workers:*

1. must have worked at a defense nuclear facility on or before September 27, 1991;
2. must have worked at a facility within 180 days preceding the work force restructuring notification;
3. must have worked at a facility a total time, including time worked prior to September 27, 1991, equivalent to an employee having worked full-time from September 27, 1991, to the date of the restructuring notification, or have actually worked the industry standard of full-time from September 27, 1991, through the date of the restructuring notification; and
4. must have been affected by the announced restructuring within a reasonable period of time (one year is suggested). For an intermittent worker, this includes the interruption of a project before its anticipated completion, or the completion of the assignment or project without prospect for a follow-on assignment at the site where the employee had a reasonable expectation of a follow-on assignment.